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Human Skeletal Remains: Excavation, Analysis, Interpretation, 2nd ed. by Douglas H. Ubelaker (Review)

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gens, but the conscious and widely effective control of infectious diseases only occurred during the last century.

Population pressure on resources, which can arise in several ways, is said to propel cultural evolution. Higher fertility after the development of agricultural economies and sedentary communities led to an increase in population growth rates when measured on broad regional or global scales. Both positions, although not unique to this book, will fuel controversies over these particular subjects.

Points raised in the text, which represents only half of the book, are supported by often lengthy notes that provide additional documentation, sources, and dissenting opinions. Anthropological, osteological, dietary, and demographic source materials tend to be more current than the medical references and information.

As an archaeologist, Cohen is consistently more at home with cultural, as opposed to biological, issues. This is particularly apparent in his coverage of the strengths and weaknesses of available data, the histories behind scholarly controversies, and the bases of conflicting interpretations, some of which are better supported than others. Readers are advised to refer to original sources, especially those pertaining to demography and human osteology, since reservations concerning the general applicability of results and probable biases are rarely discussed. In particular, Cohen is too sanguine about the problems associated with extrapolating from skeletal lesion frequencies to the prevalence of particular conditions in prehistoric populations. By stressing diachronic trends in disease experience among peoples who practiced contrasting ways of life, the considerable variability in the health of geographically proximate populations that shared the same cultural tradition or mode of subsistence does not receive the attention it deserves.

The number of new studies, techniques, and significant changes in perceptions about health and population-related issues serve as eloquent testimony for the importance of human skeletons for addressing issues of concern to us all. This book is especially timely given the current pressure to rebury prehistoric skeletons, which jeopardizes museum collections in the United States and elsewhere. Cohen's volume is highly recommended for its broad coverage and succinct portrayal of the principal findings about the health and demographic characteristics of the kinds of societies that all humans lived in until comparatively recent times.

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HUMAN SKELETAL REMAINS: EXCAVATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION[2], by *Douglas H. Ubelaker*. (Manuals on Archeology 2.) Pp. xi + 172, figs. 164. Taraxacum, Washington, D.C. 1989. $20

The substantially enlarged second edition of *Human Skeletal Remains* merits the attention of all archaeologists concerned with the recovery and analysis of burials. Ubelaker's extremely well-illustrated work has been expanded nearly 50% from the 115 pages of the original edition (1978), by updating previous information and adding recent and innovative material. The brief introductory chapter as well as Chapters 2, 4, and 6 are updated, but remain essentially the same. Chapter 2, previously titled "Cemetery Excavation," has been discreetly renamed "Skeletal Recovery." Much of the addition is in the entirely new Chapter 5 ("Race, Identity, and Time Since Death"), which focuses on forensic research.

The many revisions and additions to this work have made it an even more useful handbook for anyone interested in studies of human skeletons and skeletal populations. In Chapter 3 ("Sex, Stature, and Age") Ubelaker now provides information about differentiating between the bones of humans and those of animals of approximately the same size. Also included is interesting information on "discriminant function sexing." Apparently, Ubelaker's traditional use of the term "sex" in this context has not engendered controversy, nor does this usage detract from the valuable information included in this chapter. This revised chapter also presents recently published information on the estimation of age based on changes in the sternal ends of ribs, and also on the auricular surface of the ilium, important data for researchers working with disturbed burials. Of considerable value to Classical archaeologists is Ubelaker's summary of the data on attempts to estimate parturition from skeletal studies of the remains of females. I am in complete agreement with Ubelaker's conclusion that "existing data do not permit estimating accurately the number of births" using skeletal evidence.

Perhaps the most useful inclusion in this new edition (Table 9 and Appendix 1) are Trotter's data on stature estimations, which originally appeared as a contribution to T.D. Stewart's *Personal Identification in Mass Disasters* (Washington, D.C. 1970) 71–83. Another important change in this second edition is Ubelaker's approach to the calculation of stature from the skeletons of Native Americans. I believe that the Trotter and Gleser (*American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 16 [1958]) regression equations for calculating the stature of "Mongoloids" should not be used for Native American populations because the individuals on which these formulae are based were modern ethnic Asian-Americans. While Ubelaker's 1978 edition did utilize the related work of S. Genovés with Mexican skeletal populations (*American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 26 [1967]), the second edition provides a more appropriate presentation of this topic.

The considerable value of human skeletal studies in the reconstruction of ancient societies is now clearly recognized. Skeletal information is increasingly incorporated into (and not just appended to) archaeological reports. Ubelaker's volume provides readers with an extremely efficient introduction to the uses of human skeletal materials. Readers will also gain a good understanding of how rapidly this aspect of physical anthropology is expanding, and how recent research has done much to improve the precision of these studies. Ubelaker's 10 pages of "Literature Cited" include 46 references dating from 1980 or after, indicating the speed with which our knowledge about human skeletal analysis has advanced. Ubelaker effectively communicates the need to have physical anthropologists working in the field with archaeologists, wherever skeletal populations are being recovered, and to have them work to integrate the information

derived from their specialty into the analysis of the excavation data in general.

When considering Ubelaker's position at the Smithsonian Institution, close to the center of the raging controversy concerning the reburial of Native American skeletal populations now held in scientific collections, his decision to provide a second edition of this work may be considered a courageous act. The concerns of living people, whether religious, ideological, or political, for the remains of their real or supposed ancestors, remains an issue rarely arising in Old World archaeology. The careful attention that many New World archaeologists now must pay to these matters should be understood if readers are to appreciate fully the conditions under which this useful and very reasonably priced volume has appeared.

For introductory students and general readers, as well as for archaeologists interested in learning what human skeletal remains can reveal, this volume provides an outstanding distillation of the goals and methods of physical anthropology.

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A POT FOR ALL REASONS: CERAMIC ECOLOGY REVISITED. PAPERS DEDICATED TO FREDERICK R. MATSON, 1986, edited by *Charles C. Kolb* and *Louanna M. Lackey*. Pp. xxv + 261, figs. 54. Special publication of *Ceramica de Cultura Maya et al., 1988*. Laboratory of Anthropology, Temple University, Philadelphia 1988.

The 10 papers in this volume evolved from a symposium at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association in 1986 dedicated, as is the volume, to Frederick R. Matson. The decision to publish came after the symposium, although no discussion, queries, or cross-referential comments suggest that authors were familiar with each others' papers. An informal biographical sketch of Matson's life to date, by Kolb, provides more detail and a better sense of that charming and thoughtful scholar than do previously published tributes.

Four papers address aspects of specialist production. Mossman and Selsor summarize a very interesting study of the potteries of Agost in southeastern Spain. In the 19th century an expanding market for their water jars encouraged increased efficiency in the production of those traditional forms. Today's declining market, on the other hand, is being met with innovation and diversity—in the organization of production, as well as in the products. Mouat and Arnold look at part-time specialists, providing a social and environmental analysis of the lives and motivations of impoverished female potters in El Porvenir, Honduras. Hagstrum devises a "production task index" to quantify the amount of potter's time invested in each of several ancient and modern wares. She uses the results to distinguish between independent and attached specialist production in the Wanka Phase of Peru. Benco measures and compares variation in rim diameters of archaeological and ethnographic examples of wheel- and handbuilt vessels known to have been made by specialists. Her data support the inference that low variability in rim diameter is a result of the frequency with which an individual produces a particular shape. Interestingly, the handbuilt pots in her sample, made by full-time specialists, show the least variability in rim diameter.

Five papers address questions of vessel function and meaning. Some also indirectly address classification, by grouping materials regardless of ware, on the basis of some other variable(s) more relevant to the particular question being pursued. Beaudry argues for dropping preconceived notions of elite and utilitarian wares and looking at the contexts of ceramic use, since—and she provides convincing archaeological examples—the same pot may have different social meanings in different contexts. Chase classifies some of her material by context, i.e., the contents of caches; and some of it by function, i.e., incense burners, for an analysis of state control over Mayan ritual. Deal and Silk provide a thoughtful report on experiments using gas chromatography to identify former vessel contents and, therefore, possible functions. The paper is refreshingly self-critical, pointing out current drawbacks and suggesting future work that might make the procedure more useful. Kolb combines contexts, hints of vessel uses in ethnohistorical and codical documents, and common-sense observations to propose a range of functions for Copoid vessels. Lackey, using experimental and ethnoarchaeological work, reinterprets an earlier investigator's identification of coarse domestic pots from a particular site. She suggests the pieces are molds and saggars and thus identify a location of production.

Lackey's study is partly a response to problems introduced by characterization studies that suggested Mayan Thin Orange Wares could not have been produced where many archaeologists, on independent grounds—now including those presented here—think they must have been produced. Some of the confusion about Thin Orange production centers may be explained by Betancourt, Myer, and Rutter's paper. Theirs is a straightforward preliminary report on petrographic analyses of 104 sherds from Lerna IV. Those petrographic analyses identified at least five different temper groups based on mineralogical content. Not surprisingly, the temper groups cut across the nine archaeological classes of the sample, since those were based on surface treatment and coarseness. Samples from each archaeological class occur within a single temper group. The two groups, formed with different controlling variables, are different in kind: apples and oranges. What should we expect a characterization of oranges to tell us about the source of apples?

Only one paper, Kolb's, addresses the unfashionable but fundamental subject of ceramic sequence and chronology. Disappointingly, he provides only a standard description of phased pieces, information more appropriate for another kind of publication. He fails to provide the more broadly useful rationale for, e.g., his insistence that *copas* occur earlier than maintained by another investigator.

Although seven of the papers have a New World focus, all deal in some fashion with issues and questions of real relevance to Old World ceramic studies. The potteries of Agost provide a model that would be fascinating to test with,